

The Premier Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres

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The Premier Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres was held in Dakar in 1966. The festival, which has come to be known as FESMAN, was the most audacious and extravagant transnational cultural event of its kind to be staged in Africa. Between 1 and 24 April the Senegalese capital welcomed 2,500 performers from thirty African nations, the US, South America, Europe and the Caribbean. Amongst the musical luminaries persuaded to participate were Duke Ellington, Marion Anderson and Louis Armstrong. The highlight of the dance programme was undoubtedly the presence of the ‘matriarch’ of ‘Black’ dance, Katherine Dunham. Also in attendance were the Haitian National Dance Troupe, the New York-based Alvin Ailey Company and the celebrated, but, by the 1960s, controversial performer Josephine Baker. In terms of the plastic arts, a centrepiece exhibition was curated for the purpose-built Musée Dynamique where African drawings, sculptures and decorative objects were displayed alongside reproductions of works by European painters such as Pablo Picasso, Fernand Léger and Amedeo Modigliani. FESMAN’s literary, cinematic and intellectual programme was equally impressive, and united such major figures as Wole Soyinka, Langston Hughes, Aimé Césaire, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, Ousmane Sembene and Léopold S. Senghor, Senegal’s poet-president and the festival’s principal creative architect.

Beyond the sheer scale of FESMAN and the logistical, financial and diplomatic challenges involved in organizing it, the sociopolitical value of this cultural spectacle cannot be underestimated. As a bracketed-off occasion taking place at a crucial juncture in Sub-Saharan African history, the festival’s system of self-representation provides crucial insights into the ways in which a post-independence nation under construction aimed to stake a place for itself on the international

stage and, in the process, promote an understanding of transnational Black culture. In this regard, the festival was intended to be a showcase for the Senghorian concept of Negritude, the essentialist, and for many immutable, concept of 'black' identity that would contribute on equal terms to a globalized 'new humanism' or *civilisation de l'universel*. However, as David Murphy explains, the images of black culture that emerge from Senghor's writings are informed by an unquestionably elitist preference for 'high' over 'low' culture, and are invariably 'turned towards the past with little sense of the very real engagements with western-dominated modernity taking place throughout Africa'.¹ The result, then, is a festival that, beyond the triumphalist rhetoric of rejuvenation and reunification, cannot but betray what Tobias Wofford terms the 'fractures and slippages in the constitution of a global black subjectivity'.²

A growing body of critical and theoretical work has, of course, explored the richly reflexive quality of large-scale transnational cultural festivals and the unique way in which, precisely, they expose the 'fractures and slippages' mentioned by Wofford.³ As a result, such events are no longer seen as marginalia to supposedly more significant contexts, but are instead examined as a domain of historical representation in their own right. Curiously, however, FESMAN has not been the subject of any sustained historical or critical examination.⁴

1. David Murphy, 'Culture, Development and the African Renaissance: Ousmane Sembene and Léopold Senghor at the World Festival of Negro Arts (Dakar 1966)', in *Ousmane Sembene and the Politics of Culture*, ed. by Lifongo J. Vetinde and Amadou T. Fofana (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2015), pp. 1–16 (p. 7).
2. Tobias Wofford, 'Exhibiting a Global Blackness: The First World Festival of Negro Arts', in *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness*, ed. by Karen Dubinsky and others (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2009), pp. 179–86 (p. 180).
3. See for example Paul Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas: History of the Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World's Fairs* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990). See also Philip W. Scher's study of carnival culture in the Caribbean context: *Carnival and the Formation of a Caribbean Transnation* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2003).
4. The broader cultural influence of FESMAN on the visual arts and dance is examined by Elizabeth Harney in her *In Senghor's Shadow: Art, Politics and the Avant-Garde in Senegal, 1960-1995* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004) and by Francesca Castaldi

There is, for example, no single monograph detailing the content of the festival's cultural programme, describing its impact nationally and internationally, or documenting the practical and financial organization of such an audacious event. In the small but growing number of articles and book chapters where FESMAN has been studied, critics have understandably tended to focus on the festival's cultural content. The result is a dispersed body of work that highlights the complex role played by culture in FESMAN's existential message of a rejuvenated transnational 'black' identity, and/or seeks to understand the thought processes of the primary messenger of that view of blackness, Léopold S. Senghor.

This article builds on existing analysis of the role of culture in FESMAN's articulation of a transnational black subjectivity. It takes as its starting point the widespread assumption that the festival's organizers ultimately failed to demonstrate a *practical* role for culture in this particular context. I argue here, however, that a focus on the festival's somewhat abstruse cultural rhetoric, however understandable, is prematurely narrow because it risks sidelining economic factors, and in particular the hoped-for economic benefits of the festival, that unquestionably played a role in determining how the festival was imagined and the kind of future to which it could give rise. Many of FESMAN's organizers, and particularly the influential figure of Senghor, may well have emphasized cultural prestige as the primary contributing factor to Africa's future development. However, others saw the economic field as simultaneously shaping a role for 'black' culture and understood that the transnational context of the festival

in *Choreographies of African Identities: Négritude, Dance and the National Ballet of Senegal* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006). See also Andrew Apter's *The Pan-African Nation: Oil and the Spectacle of Culture in Nigeria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), an important study of FESMAN's successor, the 1977 Lagos-based Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC). Mention should also be made here of a special issue of *Africultures* published in May 2008 that deals with festival culture in Africa, including FESMAN. A further article by David Murphy explores the cultural and political significance of the festival: 'Culture, Empire and the Postcolony: From *la francafrique* to Le Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres (1966 and 2010)', *Francosphères*, 1.1 (2012), 19–33.

opened up new possibilities for ‘selling’ culture. The point of departure for the present analysis is, therefore, the under-acknowledged touristic activity at the festival and the commercial role for culture this betokens.

The decision to focus on festival travel is not incidental. As a transnational event seeking to attract large numbers of visitors, FESMAN both gave rise to certain tourist practices and also actively promoted them. My reading of this aspect of Dakar ’66 will rely on the consideration of three key sources that draw attention to the innate connection between FESMAN and tourism development: a promotional article on Senegal published in the festival’s official bilingual programme, press coverage of the immediate build-up to the festival in Senegal’s weekly francophone newspaper, *L’Unité africaine*, and, finally, André Malraux’s first-hand account of his visit to FESMAN in his capacity of French Minister for Culture. What these sources reveal is that the development of a viable Senegalese tourist industry capable of catering to the transnational market of FESMAN was seen as a powerful means of representing the nation as a modern economy. And whilst the tourist-related activities of Dakar ’66 may appear to provide a different narrative to that constructed by the festival’s cultural component, this article argues that the attention it draws to Senegal and Africa’s modernizing efforts provides just as effective a basis from which to assess the complex ‘fractures and slippages’ of this seminal event.

Although there is no single path of entry into the study of FESMAN, the colonial exhibitions and world’s fairs that were staged in Europe and the United States from the middle of the nineteenth century provide a highly distinctive and essentially modern representational order that critics such as Andrew Apter and David Murphy have identified as relevant to aspects of FESMAN’s postcolonial system of ideological promotion. As with other historical precedents, world’s fairs and colonial exhibitions continue the long use of festivals for ideological reasons.⁵ A number of key studies have revealed how these

5. Here mention must be made of the ancient Greek festival model that unquestionably influenced the classically-trained Senghor. For more on this particular festival history

lavish nineteenth and twentieth-century spectacles combined aspects of popular and elite culture with a museum ethos and celebratory festival spirit in order to flex muscle and to sell a vision of economic, national, military and cultural might. In this regard, Mabel O. Wilson's description of the twofold objective of U.S. world's fairs to '[promote] the promise of industrialization' and '[advance] American hegemony by demonstrating its superiority and its historical legitimacy' is easily adapted to understand how the organizers of colonial exhibitions were similarly concerned to justify, and garner popular support for, colonialism, through the complex performance of European cultural and racial superiority.⁶

Another key aspect of these events, and one that is pertinent to the economic-related interests of the present article, is the light they shed on more recent areas of critical interest such as urban planning and cultural economies, including, as we shall see below, the development of tourism. For example, the scale and ambition of these events meant they were characterized to a significant degree by extensive forward planning and investment in infrastructure. In many cases, colonial exhibitions and world's fairs left lasting legacies in terms of architecture and urban and economic development. Crucially, too, fairs and exhibitions began to blur the very distinctions that might have once been said to define them. Thus, where once fairs might have been understood exclusively as places for selling and exhibitions as places for displaying, in the modern context these two purposes came to sustain each other. On one level, this mutual relationship between mercantile capitalism and nineteenth-century exhibitions and world's fairs can help us to grasp metaphorically how such events are used to 'sell' ideology. However, the decidedly 'modern' use of display for stimulating sales, or the

see Sinclair Bell and Glenys Davies, eds, *Games and Festivals in Classical Antiquity* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2000). The 'utopian' festival culture of Revolutionary France as analysed by Mona Ozouf in *La Fête révolutionnaire 1789–1799* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976) is also relevant to the idealized way in which many post-independent African nations imagined their emerging social, political and cultural orders.

6. Mabel O. Wilson, *Negro Building: Black Americans in the World of Fairs and Museums* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012), p. 5.

placing on display of that which is for sale, also points to a crucial shift in how visitors to these events were understood and how they came to identify themselves. As Timothy Mitchell explains, 'exhibitions were coming to resemble the commercial machinery' of Western capitalist cities, and as a result visitors were seen, and indeed saw themselves, as consumers.⁷ It is this ability of large-scale festival events to attract 'consumers' and generate spillover economic production that I wish to explore in the context of tourism development at FESMAN.

Although FESMAN sought to convey an image of a 'modern' Africa, the festival's philosophical emphasis on cultural prestige as the cornerstone of transnational black identity tends to elide the connection between contemporary systems of display and the commodification of culture. In a related way, although the '6,000 étrangers' and '20,000 Sénégalais ou ressortissants des pays limitrophes' expected to visit the festival were clearly identified as important stakeholders in the event's demonstration and celebration of transnational black culture, their role as customers is not highlighted, as official documentation gives no indication whether entry to performances and exhibitions was charged.⁸ This is not to say, however, that the festival had no commercial objectives or profit-making aspirations. On the contrary, closer examination suggests that the organizers were in fact fully aware of, and actively exploited the connection between, the modern exhibition's twin objectives of displaying and selling for both ideological and economic gain.

The inclusion in the official bilingual festival programme, or 'plaquette', of several striking advertisements for local products is the first suggestion that the machinery of commerce had its place in the festival. In other words, if FESMAN appeared to have one eye on an untainted role for culture in the emergence of a 'new humanism', the other was firmly fixed on the economic potential of the event. These

7. Timothy Mitchell, 'Orientalism and the Exhibitionary Order', in *Colonialism and Culture*, ed. by Nicholas B. Dirks (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1992), pp. 289–317 (p. 299).

8. Aly Dioum, 'Le Commissaire national fait le point des préparatifs à 35 jours de l'évènement', *L'Unité africaine*, 24 February 1966, p. 9.

lavishly produced full-page advertisements for products such as soap, oils, fabrics and beer, and businesses that include banking, shipping, phosphate mining and car dealerships, suggest an image of Senegal as developing a consumer and industrial order that visitors to the cultural festival are invited both to admire and partake in.

However, the adverts published in the official festival brochure also reflect a much more concerted effort on the part of organizers to use the festival to develop what one regional Senegalese governor is quoted as referring to as the 'industrie des temps modernes': tourism.⁹ In this commercial context, the task of the festival is to design a modern 'brand Senegal' in order to market the country as a tourist destination and thereby generate wealth. Inevitably, its success will hinge on persuading the festival-goer to travel on from FESMAN 'performances' to the 'real' thing by becoming a tourist. And in this respect it is worth noting that the relationship of large-scale cultural spectacles to tourism and mobility has a history as long as the festival's ideological uses.

Part of the appeal of world's fairs and colonial exhibitions were the possibilities they provided for virtual recreational travel. 'Pourquoi aller en Tunisie quand vous pouvez la visiter aux portes de Paris?' asked the organizers of the 1931 Exposition Coloniale in the French capital, who had recreated France's colonial empire in the eastern edge of the city.¹⁰ It goes without saying, of course, that the reconstructed worlds to which visitors travelled in ever larger numbers were also 'performed' by 'native exhibits' who had themselves travelled very real distances. Plans by exhibition and festival organizers to build or improve local travel infrastructure for such large-scale events also demonstrate a keen understanding of the fact that fostering the relationship between such constructed cultural experiences and tourism could be mutually sustaining. Expanded spectator numbers meant a more successful event that in turn increased visitor numbers and bolstered arguments to

9. Ibrahima Niang, 'Développement du tourisme dans la région du Sénégal oriental', *L'Unité africaine*, 17 February 1966, p. 5.

10. Quoted in Charles Forsdick, 'Revisiting Exoticism: from Colonialism to Postcolonialism', in *Francophone Postcolonial Studies: A Critical Introduction*, ed. by Charles Forsdick and David Murphy (London: Arnold, 2003), pp. 46–55 (p. 48).

expand exhibitions and repeat them at regular intervals. Indeed, such is the privileged relationship that has developed between the festival and the travel practices to which it gives rise that David Picard and Mike Robinson have deciphered its nature to be one where the mobility associated with tourism comes to define 'festivity'. They go on to present a more comprehensive thesis according to which:

transnational events to which participants touristically travel become the symptom of the disappearance of former systems of social and symbolic boundaries and, at the same time, of the reinvention of new patterns of social existence.¹¹

In FESMAN's simultaneous planning for touristic development we see clearly a strategy for reinventing a new pattern of social existence that is far more explicitly underpinned by economic concerns than the festival's discourse on culture. Indeed, one of the clearest practical demonstrations of the decision to tie Senegal's touristic development into the festival is the state-sponsored 'Quinzaine nationale du tourisme et de l'amabilité'. Reporting on the opening of this fascinatingly titled tourism event, an anonymous journalist with *L'Unité africaine* describes the imminent FESMAN not in terms of the cultural significance its organizers sought to highlight, but rather as a 'test' to determine whether the nation 'est capable de devenir un grand pays touristique'.¹² 'Culture' may be seen by Senghor and FESMAN's organizers as the bedrock of an African renaissance, but for this reporter the future will be shaped just as much by the tourist: 'il faut que chaque Sénégalais sache, avant le déferlement des vagues touristiques prévues pendant et après le Festival, que le touriste est un élément important de l'avenir du Sénégal'.¹³

11. David Picard and Mike Robinson, 'Remaking Worlds: Festival, Tourism and Change', in *Festival Tourism and Social Change*, ed. by David Picard and Mike Robinson (Clevedon: Channel View Publications, 2006), pp. 1–31 (p. 3, p. 6).

12. 'Une quinzaine nationale de tourisme et de l'amabilité', *L'Unité africaine*, 3 March 1966, p. 7.

13. 'Une quinzaine nationale'.

A different but no less emphatic demonstration of tourism's importance for the future of 'modern' Senegal is an article by Charles-Guy Etcheverry entitled simply 'Le Sénégal'. This piece also appears in the official festival programme and, tellingly, all the above-mentioned full-page adverts are inserted into it.¹⁴ Addressed this time to an implicitly well-heeled, foreign (almost certainly western) festival-goer, Etcheverry's pitch is to promote the 'real' Senegalese world of which FESMAN offers but a performance.

In a notable departure from the lofty rhetoric of key organizers and patrons, yet at the same time repeating the festival ethos of Africa's ancient social and symbolic traditions being remade for a new era, Etcheverry reassures festival-goers that Senegal's location 'au bord de l'Atlantique entre l'ancien monde et le nouveau' (*LS* 26) makes it an exemplary destination for the western tourist. This rebranding requires a delicate balancing act that, like FESMAN's vision of a transnational 'Black Culture', presents images of a traditional past packaged inside the portrait of a rapidly restructuring modern society. Thus, for example, visitors are promised they will discover 'les traditions et les coutumes d'un peuple à la fois très vieux et très jeune' (*LS* 26). At the same time the travel practices of the colonial era are evoked, but tamed, for contemporary festival-goers/tourists, who are offered the tantalizing prospect of reliving the headier aspects of this earlier travel experience, yet reassured that they will enjoy all the comfort and safety provided by contemporary conditions:

Le tourisme au Sénégal n'est plus une aventure: la terre tropicale la plus proche d'Europe est mise à la portée de tous tant par l'avion et le navire que par l'infrastructure des communications intérieures, déjà très développées et s'améliorant d'année en année. (*LS* 27)

14. Charles-Guy Etcheverry, 'Le Sénégal', in *Premier Festival mondial des arts nègres. Dakar 1/24 avril 1966*, the official festival programme produced by the National Festival Committee, pp. 26–35, hereafter *LS* in the text.

In the space of a few pages Etcheverry takes the festival-goer and potential tourist on a journey beginning with the arrival by airplane in Dakar, the ‘grande capitale d’un État indépendant et moderne’. From there, the visitor can take a trip ‘à bord d’un car luxueux’ to Gorée, where the ‘gémissements d’esclaves poussés dans les entrailles d’un navire négrier’ (*LS* 29) can be heard. By continuing to travel, lesser known attractions can be discovered such as the ‘charme désuet’ of the old colonial capital, Saint Louis, the ‘inhospitalière et dangereuse’ north coast (*LS* 31), the south coast where Senghor was born, the richly diverse region of Casamance, or the more desert-like interior.

In his seminal work on the tourist industry and sight-seeing, Dean MacCannell observes that:

the touristic value of a modern community lies in the way it organizes social, historical, cultural and natural elements into a stream of impressions. [...] Modern society makes of itself its principal attraction in which the other attractions are embedded.¹⁵

Looking closely at the structure and content of Etcheverry’s article, it is clear that the latter’s aim is precisely to highlight Senegal’s touristic value as defined by MacCannell. As images of the landscape described by Etcheverry appear to stream across the page just as they would through the window of the festival-goer/tourist’s luxury transport, the impression created of Senegal is indeed that of a highly organized modern society that frames the festival just as much as the festival appears to frame it. Needless to say, it is no coincidence that the visitor being targeted by this touristic marketing arrives by plane. Many of those reading the article will have already travelled through Dakar’s newly expanded airport opened by Senghor just in time for the beginning of the festival.¹⁶ Indeed, one festival-goer, the North American Africanist

15. Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley, LA: University of California Press, 1999 [1976]), p. 48.

16. Anonymous, ‘La Nouvelle Aérogare de Dakar-Yoff a été inauguré par le Président Senghor’, *L’Unité africaine*, 31 March 1966, p. 3

scholar and philanthropist, Newell Flather, makes brief mention of the airport in his first-hand account of FESMAN, and suggests that it, along with 'the new theatre, museum and stadium', makes the Senegalese capital 'an ideal setting for an international gathering'.¹⁷

On one level, the evocation of the lavishly refurbished airport, as well as the photographs accompanying Etcheverry's article of other decidedly 'modern' buildings in Dakar — including some mentioned by Flather — serve as a reminder of the ways in which large-scale cultural events and festivals use, transform and (re)create social spaces. However, the state-of-the-art airport also vividly encapsulates Senegal and Africa's aspirations on the international stage. The airport is a point of exchange, a hub for trade and commerce, a symbol of transport's technological progress and, more crucially, Senegal (and Africa's) embrace of it. At the same time, Etcheverry's reference to the airport and the air travel it connotes repeats another key principle promoted by the festival: the possibility of experiencing a wide variety of traditions, landscapes and people with all the ease of any modern, progressive society.

The reference to Gorée by Etcheverry, and his explicit linking of it to the trauma of Atlantic slavery, also appears to suggest a certain 'modern' and touristic evocation of the past. Clearly, his decision to mention the island and evoke its connections to the slave trade, is inspired by FESMAN's own decision to use this highly symbolic site for staging the festival's key 'spectacle féerique', a performance that is described elsewhere as retelling 'en huit tableaux animés l'histoire de cette petite île qui vit à partir du XVII^e au XVIII^e siècle la plus grande part des vingt millions de noirs déportés vers les Amériques'.¹⁸ The inaccuracy of this account of Gorée's past, or Etcheverry's failure to make explicit whether Senegal will recognize its own role in the slave trade even as it commodifies it, is not what is of interest here.¹⁹ Rather,

17. Newell Flather, 'Impressions of the Dakar Festival', *Africa Report*, May 1966, 57–60 (p. 58).

18. Dioum, 'Le Commissaire national'.

19. Of course, Gorée's then emerging status as a key West African site of historical memory illustrates some of the Festival's ideological and economic objectives: the

it is an engagement with the past that suggests a distinctly touristic understanding of how Senegal must promote itself to a key element of its transnational, diasporic audience, i.e. African American descendants of the Atlantic slave trade. On one highly complex level, this particular transformation of Gorée, the powerful historical 'site', into Gorée, the tourist 'sight', could be said to link into FESMAN's discourse of a new harmony that brings festival-goers together with international performers and Senegalese hosts. For, as MacCannell asserts, when elements of a modern society, including its past, are 'transformed into tourist attractions, they join with [other] modern social attractions in a new unity, or a new universal solidarity, that includes the tourist'.²⁰

However, it is here that FESMAN's touristic ambitions reveal perhaps more starkly than its cultural project the fault lines and tensions in any 'utopian' discourse of unity. Whatever shared cultural past exists amongst the black populations represented at the festival, the very logic of contemporary tourism means that many of the festival-goers encouraged to visit Senegal as tourists occupy a radically different economic position to their Senegalese hosts. William Greaves's documentary film of FESMAN, for example (and in so far as it is possible to determine from a purely visual source), shows that the transnational audience targeted by official tourism initiatives was decidedly well-heeled.²¹ In contrast, the lives of many of those who would be their hosts appear to

island's supposed role as a major slave-trading centre symbolized the connections that united Africans and the African diaspora whilst at the same time pointing to their liberation and their future hopes. However, since the 1960s, historians have repeatedly challenged the island's statistical significance in the slave trade without always denying its symbolic importance. A key work in this respect is Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969). More recently, archaeologists have contested the official tendency to present Gorée purely as a transit centre where slavers were white and the enslaved were the ancestors of the African American diaspora. This history, they argue, fails to address complex patterns of local slave ownership by the island's free African and elite Afro-European population. See Ibrahima Thiaw, 'Every House has a Story: The Archaeology of Gorée Island, Senegal', in *Africa, Brazil, and the Construction of Trans-Atlantic Black Identities*, ed. by Boubacar Barry, Elisée Soumonni and Livio Sasone (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2008), pp. 45–62.

20. MacCannell, *The Tourist*, p. 83.

21. *First World Festival of Negro Arts*, dir. by William Greaves (1966).

be shut out from the lavish proceedings filmed by Greaves. Instead, it is left to Ousmane Sembene to expose their economic vulnerability and isolation in his highly critical novella *Le Mandat*, a text that ironically won a major literary prize at FESMAN.²²

Once again Dean MacCannell's discussion of the modern transformation of social life for the consumption of tourists is relevant to the present discussion. Taking his cue from sociologist Erving Goffman, MacCannell describes how tourism frequently requires hosts to act or perform their 'real' lives according to a structure that designates 'front' and 'back' regions. The 'front' region is any context where hosts and tourists might encounter each other. The back region 'allows concealment of props and activities that might discredit the performance out front. In other words, sustaining a firm sense of social reality requires *some mystification*'.²³ Description of FESMAN's tourist-related activities suggests an implicit understanding that distinguishing these spaces must be the first priority if Senegal is to achieve its touristic potential.

In a press conference conducted in March 1966, Senegal's Ministre de l'information/ minister for information gives one indication of how the 'front region' is being prepared for the festival and beyond. He notes on the one hand that disturbances and protests by students — the latter largely foreign by his account — that had earlier threatened to interfere with the smooth running of FESMAN are now being dealt with. To those who have been involved in anti-government demonstrations, he warns that 'le Gouvernement se montrera à leur égard d'une fermeté inébranlable'.²⁴ As well as erasing any hint of political tension from the festival's 'front region', the minister also suggests a more sombre background to the festival when he describes ongoing efforts to deal with

22. Ousmane Sembene, *Le Mandat/Véhi-Ciosane* (Paris: Présence africaine, 1966).

23. MacCannell, *The Tourist*, p. 93 (emphasis in original).

24. Anonymous, 'Le Sénégal ne se laissera pas imposer sa politique par des étrangers', *L'Unité africaine*, 3 March 1966, p. 1. For an account of the political tensions in Senegal, and in particular student unrest, as Senghor effectively establishes a *de facto* one party state, see Jean-Pierre Ndiaye, *La Jeunesse africaine face à l'impérialisme* (Paris: François Maspero, 1971).

les problèmes relatifs à l'assainissement de la ville de Dakar qui sont à l'ordre du jour à la veille du festival. Si la lutte déclenchée depuis le 25 août 1965 par la police contre les mendiants, les lépreux, les vagabonds et les aliénés qui pullulent dans notre capitale a déjà eu des résultats spectaculaires, il importe de la poursuivre avec des moyens renforcés, afin d'aboutir à un assainissement définitif. (LS 1)

Clearly, the emphasis here is on achieving 'some mystification' thanks to the pristine appearance of the 'front region' to be experienced by festival-goers. And whilst the inhabitants of the particular 'back region' described here will be out of view for the festival-goer, there is no doubt that attempts are being made to ready the space they have occupied for incorporation within an expanding 'front' space. Indeed, this space-clearing process explains the stated aim of the 'Quinzaine du tourisme' to 'susciter un comportement de la population adapté au tourisme moderne'.²⁵ In order for Dakar, and Senegal's citizens, to earn a place performing their lives in tourism's future economy, they must first adapt their behaviour. Thus, they are reportedly told by the official opening the 'Quinzaine du tourisme' that even though 'le touriste est un homme comme nous', they must be discrete in their dealings with him. In the name of the rules of hospitality that they are patronizingly advised to absorb, the Senegalese are reminded that: 'Le touriste n'est pas une machine à donner des aumônes, ou de l'argent. Il est un homme comme nous, qui a le droit d'aller et venir librement, d'acheter ce qui lui plaît, quand il lui plaît'.

Needless to say, the very nature of tourism belies the discourse of unity and harmony that it appears implicitly to borrow from official festival rhetoric in this instance. Thus, in the same article where the Senegalese are told that the tourist 'est un homme comme nous' it is simultaneously made clear that 'he' is not. In the first instance, the logic of tourism dictates that the tourist/festival-goer is a stranger. The economics

25. 'Une quinzaine nationale'. Further quotations in the main body of the text are from this article.

of tourist mobility, or the question of who can afford to travel, serves only to accentuate this. Yet the journalistic account of the 'Quinzaine de tourisme' suggests that those promoting tourism development in post-independence Senegal went even further and actively discouraged local Senegalese 'hosts' from acting on any entrepreneurial instincts normally reserved for those receiving the wealthier, more mobile tourist: 'S'il a besoin de nous, de nos services, de nos produits, mettons-nous à sa disposition aussitôt, mais sans l'importuner'. The suggestion here is that tourism development will be conducted by the state and, consequently, that the generation of revenue from the industry is not the business of the lowly citizen. There is no mention in the article of any inconvenience to the local population caused by the festival, or any disruption to normal life. Instead, local residents are asked to provide what the tourist asks for, possibly without payment. Begging is expressly denounced by the new tourist etiquette, but so too is asking for financial recompense in return for being photographed. Instead, 'payment' will be in the form of 'des chèques d'amabilité' which tourists will be asked to give to those judged to have successfully adapted to the required behaviour. And in a final attempt to motivate the host population, they are told somewhat vaguely that 'des prix récompenseront ceux qui auront reçu le plus de chèques'.

How immediately successful were attempts to use the festival as a springboard for future tourism development? Beyond the material legacy provided by architecture and infrastructural transformation, it is difficult to determine this without access to first-hand accounts or statistics regarding travel to the festival. However, to give a practical sense of what it might mean for a festival-goer to become a tourist in the context of FESMAN, I will conclude by examining André Malraux's account of his visit to Dakar at the end of March 1966.²⁶ Disappointingly, given Malraux's influential role both as French

26. See André Malraux, *Le Miroir des limbes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976). The section corresponding to the Dakar festival is included in 'La Corde et les souris', pp. 515–44, hereafter *ML* in the text. For discussion of the political and intellectual role played by Malraux at the festival, see Kalidou Sy, 'Ethos discursif, argumentation et éloge de l'art africain: Malraux à Dakar en 1966', in *Malraux et l'Afrique*, ed. by Raphaël Lambal (Paris: Présence Africaine, 2013), pp. 99–108.

Minister for culture and a patron of the festival, his account is notably short of information regarding the specifics of his involvement generally, but also provides scant details of festival performances, audiences and atmosphere. Indeed, substantial sections of his text are given over to describing lengthy philosophical conversations with Senghor in Dakar or reminiscing about encounters with other dignitaries and politicians in India, France and elsewhere in Africa. Elsewhere, the somewhat detached and even morbid tone of Malraux's ruminations seems to point to a particularly challenging period in his own personal life that culminated in his hospitalization shortly after his return to France from Senegal.²⁷ For the purposes of this article's focus on festival-related tourism, however, it is possible to identify brief but tantalizing insights into a small number of what can be described as tourist experiences. These moments point to a slow but certain adoption of tourism-related behaviour as Senegal learns to meet the tourist's needs.

Firstly, Malraux confesses to leaving Dakar during the festival, a decision that appears to be prompted by his visit to FESMAN's showpiece art exhibition. However 'éclatant' (*ML* 515) Malraux confesses to finding this display, he suggests that far more striking, and presumably 'authentic', examples of art are to be seen in villages lying outwith Dakar. Shortly afterwards he explains that 'entre la visite protocolaire au président et l'inauguration du musée, je suis allé en Casamance. J'en rêvais depuis longtemps. À cause du mot romance et des chansons des Isles'. Once there, Malraux betrays a slight disappointment when he does not recognize 'des bourgs [...] d'une propreté troublante, car la propreté nous semble moderne' (*ML* 519). Nonetheless, he enjoys an encounter with a priestess who shows him an imposing tree that serves as her 'fétiche'. Malraux is clearly impressed by the encounter and is told that the priestess has already met the British ambassador in a similar context the previous week. Later in his account, Malraux makes brief mention of having met an antiques dealer at an event following the opening of the new museum at FESMAN. He quotes the dealer as

27. For an insight into Malraux's mental health issues at this time, see Charles-Louis Foulon, *André Malraux: Ministre de l'irrationnel* (Paris: Gallimard, 2010).

inviting him to see 'des objets qui m'intéresseront certainement'. He goes on to describe his visit to an antique shop which reminds him of similar examples elsewhere in Africa with their collections of masks, small carved objects and animal skins. In the Dakar shop, however, he notes that 'dans un atelier nullement caché, on les fabrique à grand bruit' (*ML* 535).

Malraux's desire to visit Casamance is the first indication that the diplomat and festival-goer has become a sightseer as per Dean MacCannell's description of the figure: 'the first contact a sightseer has with a sight is not the sight itself but some representation thereof.' MacCannell uses the term 'marker' to describe information about a sight 'including that found in travel books, museum guides, stories told by persons who have visited it'.²⁸ Malraux's account suggests that whilst he has come across markers about 'African' sights in all types of contexts, including song, the festival exhibition has also functioned as a highly effective example. Malraux's claim to have been to 'Casamance' is also typical of tourist discourse as he has not, according to MacCannell's study of the sightseer, been there in any empirical sense but has, as far as the reader can determine, visited just one village. Tellingly, his surprise, and even disappointment, at the village's 'clean' appearance suggests a mismatch between the reality of this tourist's 'sight' and what he had expected from relevant markers. His failure to recognize what he terms 'modern' Senegal is also interesting because it points to an instance where attempts to promote Africa's 'traditional' past for commercial benefit risk being undermined by the type of modernity or 'assainement' that is also vital to its success.

In a related way, although there is no explicit suggestion that the priestess Malraux visits is 'performing' her role, the reader cannot help but wonder whether she has understood that Malraux, like the other diplomat and 'grands personnages' (*ML* 520) who have preceded him, is seeking out what MacCannell terms a 'touristic desire to share in the lives of places visited' and is performing an 'authentic' experience

28. MacCannell, *The Tourist*, p. 110.

for him.²⁹ At the end of the visit, however, when the Priestess asks for her best wishes to be conveyed to the French President and for de Gaulle to be given a gift of whiskey from her — which she herself had earlier received from the British ambassador — Malraux is surprised by her ‘dignité’ in the context of what he terms ‘ces cérémonies burlesques’ (*ML* 520). Here, Malraux’s identity as a tourist means that his apparent recognition of a diplomatic ‘performance’ can also be interpreted as MacCannell’s notion of ‘staged authenticity’. In such instances, the tourist appears to be given privileged access to the inner workings of the ‘back region’ but instead ‘there is a staged quality to the proceedings that lends to them an aura of superficiality, albeit a superficiality not always perceived as such by the tourist, who is usually forgiving about these matters’.³⁰ What this suggests, then, is that the interaction between Malraux and his priestess host may be prompting her to transform her life, or at least aspects of it, into a ‘staged back region, [or] a kind of living museum’.³¹ By the same token, however, Malraux’s encounter with the antiques dealer and what is effectively a souvenir-making business reminds us of other potential economic benefits and the ability of the entrepreneurially-minded to profit from tourism’s commodification of culture.

This article has demonstrated that the transnational audience attracted by the Festival Mondial des Arts Nègres created an environment conducive to the development of tourism in newly independent Senegal. Although the focus on tourism at the festival diverges in certain respects from existing work on FESMAN, I see my approach as complementary in its aim of charting the manner in which festival organizers aimed to use culture for transformative ends in both an ideological and economic sense. There are, of course, other directions that are not pursued here. A far more detailed analysis is needed to do full justice to this unprecedented event. Such a study would have to be resolutely transnational in its approach and describe the motivations of individual

29. MacCannell, *The Tourist*, p. 96.

30. MacCannell, *The Tourist*, p. 98.

31. MacCannell, *The Tourist*, p. 99.

nation states represented at Dakar as well as their exact contribution in financial but also ideological terms. A more detailed, critical account is also needed of the festival's immediate impact and the benefits, if any, to the local population. It is also important that FESMAN's system of self-representation be scrutinized so that the political realities behind its airbrushed narrative of a 'utopian' future are more adequately accounted for. Part of this task involves remaining open to the insights provided by other festival models, including other post-independence spectacles such as Ireland's equally neglected Aonach Tailteann.³² By charting the desire to use the festival for touristic purposes we can begin to understand how a newly independent state aimed to benefit in practical terms from the celebration and promotion of a newly forged transnational cultural identity.

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32. See Mike Cronin, 'Projecting the Nation through Sport and Culture: Ireland, Aonach Tailteann and the Irish Free State, 1924–32', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 38.3 (2003), 395–411.